



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
PUBLIC SCHOOLS



DCPS Parent Handbook

District of Columbia Public Schools | dcps.dc.gov

April 2013

We Are DCPS and We Can Do This!



A Capital Commitment

Our purpose is to ensure that every school in District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) provides a world-class education that prepares all of our students, regardless of background or circumstance, for success in college, career and life.

Five goals of the five-year strategic plan:

1. Improve Achievement Rates

At least 70 percent of our students will be proficient in reading and math, and we will double the number of advanced students in the district.

2. Invest in Struggling Schools

Our 40 lowest-performing schools will increase proficiency rates by 40 percentage points.

3. Increase Graduation Rate

At least 75 percent of entering ninth graders will graduate from high school in four years.

4. Improve Satisfaction

90 percent of students will say they like their school.

5. Increase Enrollment

DCPS will increase its enrollment over the years.

The DCPS Parent Handbook includes information about policies, regulations, and practices parents and families will find critical to navigate the school system. It is not intended to include a comprehensive set of all DCPS policies and practices, and is subject to change. The content provided in this document is current as of the 2012-2013 School Year.

This publication was created by the DCPS Office of Family and Public Engagement (OFPE) in partnership with the Multicultural Community Service (MCS), a Washington, D.C. non-profit organization that encourages, promotes and facilitates broad and inclusive civic participation.

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The DCPS Critical Response Team – CRT – responds quickly, reliably, and efficiently to urgent requests from DCPS stakeholders on behalf of the Chancellor and other DCPS officials. They can be reached at 202.478.5738 or by visiting dcps.dc.gov. As you review the DCPS Parent Handbook and have questions, please contact the CRT directly.

Message from the Chancellor



Kaya Henderson
Chancellor
DC Public Schools

Dear Parents and Families,

We are excited to be working with you this school year to ensure all DCPS students reach their fullest potential.

We made five big promises in our five-year strategic plan, ***"A Capital Commitment."***

A Capital Commitment is a roadmap for building a high-quality, vibrant school district that provides all DCPS students a world-class education. The plan identifies the following five goals that are key to our success:

1. Improving achievement rates;
2. Investing in struggling schools;
3. Increasing the graduation rate;
4. Improving satisfaction; and
5. Increasing enrollment.

We look forward to working with you on these goals. Together, we will prepare our students for success in school, college, careers and life. If you wish to learn more about ***A Capital Commitment***, please view a short video at <http://dcps.dc.gov/2017>.

This DCPS Parent Handbook is intended to be a tool for you to effectively navigate DCPS. It provides information about the following:

- Supporting your children's learning;
- Enrolling in DCPS;
- What to expect in DCPS; and
- Understanding academic offerings, support programs, and more!

We hope you will find the information helpful.

You should also know that DCPS recently created a toolkit for parent leaders. If you are interested in becoming a leader in your school, visit our website at dcps.dc.gov or ask your principal for a copy.

For further assistance, please contact the Office of Family and Public Engagement at 202.719.6613 or ofpe.info@dc.gov.

Kaya Henderson

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kaya Henderson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Chancellor

Strong Family-School Partnerships Help Students Succeed



Strong Family-School Partnerships Help Students Succeed

DCPS knows that parents are their children's first and most important teachers. When parents are engaged in learning, students are more likely to reach their full potential. That's why it is so important to have strong partnerships and communication between home and school.

DCPS also knows that families can make meaningful contributions to strengthen schools. High-quality family engagement leads to:

- Increased student achievement;
- Better student persistence and attitudes toward learning;
- Better student social skills and fewer conduct problems;
- Reduced drop-out rates; and
- Higher graduation rates.

Schools benefit from family engagement, too. From better reading scores to enhanced school safety, engaged families help schools get and stay on a positive path to improvement so all students can succeed.

DCPS offers a free Language Line with over-the-phone interpretation services to support families during enrollment, parent-teacher conferences and other times when families need support in their native language. You can access the Language Line by contacting the staff of your local school or calling the Office of Bilingual Education for support at 202.671.0750. "I Speak" Cards can also be downloaded from <http://ohr.dc.gov/ispeakcards> in multiple languages.

For an in-person interpreter, school personnel must submit an Interpreter Request Form at least three days in advance to the Office of Bilingual Education. Parents needing translation or interpretation services should contact the school immediately.

Become Engaged in Your Child's Learning

The opportunities are endless for families to support learning from preschool through high school. Here are 10 simple, but important, things families can do at home and in partnership with the school that contribute to academic success:

1. Make sure your children know you believe in them and that you have high expectations for their achievements. For example, ask what they want to be when they grow up, how they did on tests, or if they completed all their homework.
2. Remind your children that when they work hard, anything is possible.
3. Show your children that you care; ask about what they are learning, go on a field trip with them, and attend their performances and sports events.
4. Make sure your children attend school every day, arrive on time, and are well-rested.
5. Emphasize the importance of reading. Read to your children, visit the library, and talk about what they are reading.
6. Provide a quiet and well-lit place for your children to do their homework.
7. Help with time management. Balance school work with family and play time, sports and other extracurricular activities.

8. Monitor and limit your children's screen time (i.e., television, Internet).
9. Advocate for your children. Let teachers know the goals you have for your children, and that you intend to be a partner in your children's education.
10. Attend Parent-Teacher conferences and communicate regularly with your children's teachers. Ask questions about what skills your children need to master that year, how they are doing in school, and how you can help. Share information and solidify the family-school partnership.

PARENT TIP

Regardless of their age, your children need your involvement. Preschool children will enjoy reading on your lap and having you in the classroom. Elementary school children will enjoy sharing school work with you and will be happy to have you come to school for an assembly or performance. Middle and high school students may not need you at the school as much nor will they need as much guidance with homework if good habits are already established. Instead, middle school and high school students will need you to help make sure that they are on track for graduation. They will also want time to talk with you about their future.

Become Engaged in Your Child's School

When you become engaged in your child's school it is one way to show your child you care and are making school a part of your life. You will meet other parents and build a network that can help you as you navigate the sometimes tricky waters of parenting, especially during the middle and high school years. Finally, your presence will remind the school that you have high expectations and you will be actively partnering with teachers to support strong outcomes for all students.

Here are some suggestions:

1. Attend programs at the school to get to know other families, no matter the ages of children, parents need to support each other.
2. Start a parent mentor program to welcome new families and help them navigate the school.
3. Join a parent group (i.e., PTA, PTO) or start a group if the school doesn't already have one. Focus the energy of the parent group toward activities and events that will improve student achievement.
4. Check with the school about volunteer opportunities in the classroom.
5. Serve on the Local School Advisory Team (LSAT) to advise the principal on matters that promote high expectations and high achievement for all students.
6. Review the D.C. Office of the State Superintendent (OSSE) School Report (available at www.nclb.osse.dc.gov) and discuss it with your principal and other parents.
7. Attend a DC State Board of Education meeting. Call 202.741.0884 to find out about meeting times.
8. Participate in the DCPS Annual Beautification Day to help spruce up your school. This doesn't have to just be once-a-year; you can always help to keep the school facility clean and welcoming.

Enrolling in District of Columbia Public Schools



Rediscover
DC Public Schools



DC Public Schools

- ★ Newly, modernized and environmentally friendly schools with the latest education technology
- ★ New innovative programs including Blended Learning, School-Wide Enrichment & Extended Day
- ★ New LIFT program to support and retain our best educators

Enroll now at dcps.dc.gov/enroll



Enrolling in DC Public Schools

The enrollment process is important for both new and returning families, students and schools. Families must re-enroll students each year. This section provides an overview of the enrollment process and key dates to keep in mind.

- Your In-Boundary School
 - Pre-Kindergarten Lottery
 - High School Online Application
 - Making an Informed Enrollment Decision
 - Out-of-Boundary Lottery
 - Key Enrollment Dates
-

Your In-Boundary School

Every student has an assigned school in DCPS based on your home address. Each address falls within a school boundary (elementary, middle, education campus and high school). Any student who lives within these boundaries has a right to that school beginning in kindergarten. To find your in-boundary school visit <http://dcps.dc.gov/enroll>.

To attend your in-boundary school beginning in kindergarten, you do not have to apply through the lottery. To enroll in your in-boundary school for each school year, please submit your enrollment packet by the last day of the current school year.

Current DCPS students in transition grades (typically 5th and 8th) also have a right to attend the “destination school,” the next school in the current school’s feeder pattern. To find your destination school, please visit your current school’s profile on the DCPS website at <http://profiles.dcps.dc.gov/>.

Enrollment packets for the upcoming school year should be submitted to the school your child will be attending. All students – new and current – must submit an enrollment packet annually. Packets should be submitted by the last day of the current school year.

A list of the documentation needed for enrollment can be found on the DCPS website at <http://dcps.dc.gov/enroll> and at schools.

Making an Informed Enrollment Decision

Some families want their children to attend an in-boundary or destination school. Other families are interested in exploring other options. There are several ways to learn about school options. Consider the following:

- **School Profiles:** School profiles are designed to help families understand the various academic options and resources available at each school. Each profile contains an overview of the school that includes the academic program, sports and extracurricular activities, as well as a scorecard measuring the school’s performance, academic progress, safety, and family engagement. School profiles can be found at <http://profiles.dcps.dc.gov/>.
- **Open Houses:** Open Houses provide opportunities for families to visit the school and interact with school staff. Some schools offer tours and question/answer sessions. Contact the school for more information or look on the website.
- **School-based Events:** Schools also host community events for current and prospective families. These events can range from concerts and festivals to promotion ceremonies. Attending these events is a way to learn more about school culture and gives prospective parents a chance to meet current families. Contact the school directly if you would like to learn about upcoming events.

Pre-Kindergarten Lottery

DCPS offers seats for 3 and 4 year old children. Though students are not required by law to attend pre-kindergarten, DCPS places a strong value on early childhood education. We strive to make seats in these grades available to as many children as possible in a fair and equitable way. All families that wish to secure a seat must apply through the lottery at <http://dcps.dc.gov/OOB>. The lottery application is an online-only process.

Out-of-Boundary Lottery

The Out-of-Boundary Lottery is a school-choice service offered by DCPS that gives families the opportunity to apply for available seats at a school other than their child's in-boundary school. The out-of-boundary lottery application is an online-only process and must be completed at <http://dcps.dc.gov/OOB>.

Please note: Students who are enrolled at an out-of-boundary school must submit an enrollment packet annually. They do not need to re-enter the out of boundary lottery to remain in their current school and/or their current school's destination school.

High School Online Application

The High School Online Application (HSOA) allows incoming students in grades 9 and 10 to apply to any of DCPS' specialized city-wide high schools. The HSOA is not currently required to enroll at in-boundary high schools. DCPS' specialized schools (those requiring a HSOA) are:

- Banneker Academic High School;
- Columbia Heights Education Campus;
- Duke Ellington School of the Arts;
- McKinley Technology High School;
- Phelps Architecture, Construction, and Engineering High School; and
- School Without Walls Senior High School.

The high school application is an online-only process and must be completed online at <http://dcps.dc.gov/HSapp>.

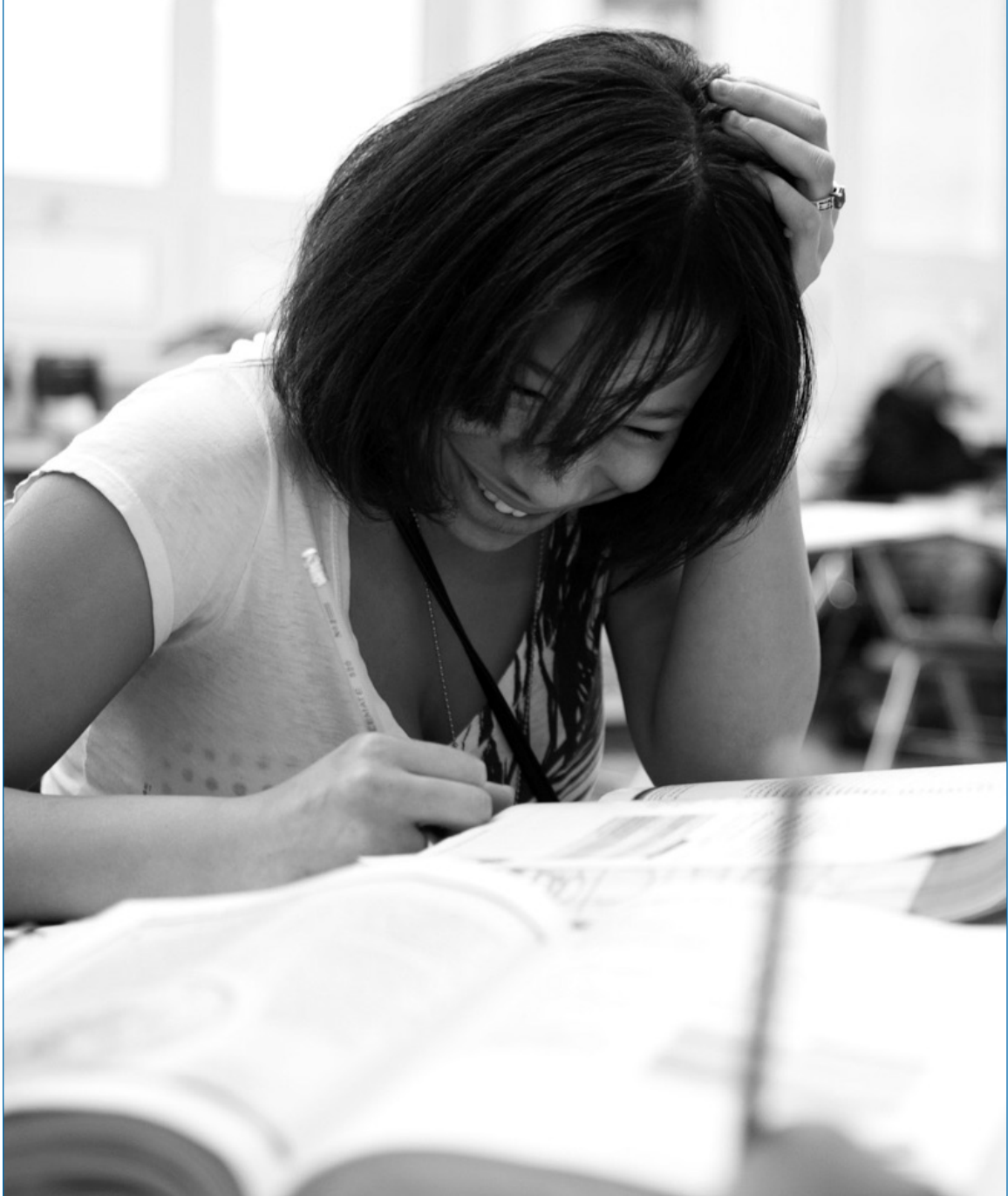
Key Enrollment Dates

Families should keep in mind several important dates during the school year that relate to enrollment. Visit the DCPS web site at <http://dcps.dc.gov/enroll> or contact your school to confirm specific dates so you do not miss an enrollment deadline.

- [High School Online Application Opens](#) – Mid-November
- [Pre-K and Out of Boundary Lottery Opens](#) – Last Monday in January
- [Pre-K and Out of Boundary Lottery Closes](#) – Last Monday in February
- [Enrollment Packet for Upcoming School Year Available](#) – First week of April
- [Enrollment Packet for students who received a seat through the Lottery or the High School Online Application](#) – End of April

Please note: You will need to prove residency each school year.

What to Expect in DCPS



What to Expect in DCPS

- Attendance
- School Schedule
- Athletics
- Health and Wellness
- Bullying
- School Emergencies, Delays or Closures
- Dress Code
- Before- and After-School Programs
- Food Service
- Transportation
- Disciplinary Policies
- School Visitor Policy

Attendance

Regular school attendance is required by DC law for children from age 5 to 18. Although not required by law, it's just as important for children in pre-kindergarten to have regular attendance as well. Attending school every day and on-time is critically important and has a huge impact on learning through high school. Even as children grow older and become more independent, families play a key role in making sure regular attendance is a priority.

Some absences are unavoidable, but, when children miss too much school – excused or unexcused – they can fall behind. Students are much less likely to succeed when they are chronically absent.

If your child received a seat through the out-of-boundary lottery and has 10 unexcused absences or 20 unexcused tardies, they may be asked to return to their neighborhood school at the end of the school year.

DID YOU KNOW...

- Children who are chronically absent in kindergarten and first grade are much less likely to read at grade level by the end of third grade.
- By sixth grade, chronic absence is a warning sign for students at-risk of dropping out of school.
- By ninth grade, good attendance can predict graduation rates even better than eighth grade test scores.

Excused absences are when school-aged students are absent from school with a valid excuse and parental approval.

Examples of excused absences include, but are not limited to the following:

- Student illness (a doctor's note is required if a student is absent for more than five days);
- Death in the student's immediate family;
- Observance of a religious holiday;
- Temporary school closings due to weather, unsafe conditions or other emergencies;
- Necessity for a student to attend a judicial proceeding as a plaintiff, defendant, witness or juror;
- Medical reasons such as a doctor's appointment (a doctor's note is required); and
- Failure of DC to provide transportation where legally responsible.

When your child returns to school after an absence, you should submit a note to the front office or designated attendance staff. The note should include the student's name, date(s) of the absence, reason for absence and a parent/guardian's signature. A doctor's note is required after the fifth consecutive day due to illness. Absences without notes or those deemed not valid will be marked "unexcused."

If absences are due to chronic health issues, such as asthma, families should contact the school nurse to ensure the appropriate health plan is developed.

If you have additional questions about attendance, visit the DCPS website at <http://dcps.dc.gov/attendance>.

Dress Code

DCPS provides discretion to principals for establishing and implementing mandatory uniform policies. Where principals choose not to mandate a school uniform, your child is still held to a high standard of neatness, cleanliness and appropriateness as dictated by the school dress code. Students violating either the school dress code or mandatory uniform policies are subject to progressive disciplinary actions.

To learn whether your school has a mandatory school uniform, call the school. For additional information about student rights and responsibilities related to the dress code, contact the school or visit <http://dcps.dc.gov>.

School Schedule

Scheduling varies according to grade or academic level.

- In pre-kindergarten through Grade 5, your child will generally stay with the same teacher in the same classroom for the entire day. As they get older, students likely transition to another teacher for electives (i.e., physical education) and interventions (i.e., reading).
- In Grades 6 - 12, your child will transition through the school's bell schedule to teachers in respective subject areas. Classes are typically between 45 - 80 minutes, and are either nine, 18 or 36 weeks long. Students may have between four and seven periods a day depending on the school's schedule.

For more information about the school schedule, contact the school.

Before- and After-School Programs

Your child can participate in before- and after-school programs that often provide a combination of academic, enrichment and wellness activities. The research is clear that participation in high-quality after-school programs helps improve school attendance, academic achievement, graduation rates, and attitudes toward learning. Students attending three hours of after-school programming each day gain the equivalent of nearly four months of traditional learning time.

Before-school programs are organized by individual schools. Check with your school for details, or visit <http://dcps.dc.gov/beforecare>.

The DCPS Office of Out-of-School Time Programs, in concert with community-based organizations, and DCPS teachers and aides, provide a variety of after-school opportunities. Programs generally operate between 3:30-6p.m., Monday -Friday except on half-days, holidays and school breaks. However, hours vary at some schools and not all schools have after-school programs. Transportation is not provided for students who participate in these programs. This includes students with disabilities who usually ride the bus to and from school.

Check with your school for details or visit <http://dcps.dc.gov/afterschool>.

Athletics

Athletics are an important part of the school experience. As such, students in Grades 4-12 are able to participate in a host of interscholastic athletics and club sports.

DID YOU KNOW...

Athletics can help to:

- Promote growth and development;
- Teach social, recreational, and leadership skills;
- Develop qualities of good citizenship and sportsmanship; and
- Support students' ability to prosper in a strong educational environment.

Your child is able to choose from soccer, baseball, softball, basketball, cheerleading, football, rugby, lacrosse, volleyball, squash, wrestling, crew and other sports, depending on their grade and school. Some athletics programs are considered club sports. Club sports differ from interscholastic athletics and do not offer the same benefits in medical or insurance coverage. Club sports teams are not eligible for league championships. To determine if your child's athletic program is a club sport, contact the school.

Prior to participating in any athletic program, the following forms are required:

- Consent to Participate in Athletics Form
- Physical Exam Form
- Signed Emergency Information Sheet

Your child must have a 2.0 Grade Point Average (GPA) or better, using advisory grades, to participate in interscholastic athletics. Progress reports may not be used to determine eligibility.

The Department of Athletics is responsible for verifying eligibility and scheduling events. Transportation is provided for league games only. For more information, visit <http://dcps.dc.gov/sports>.

Food Service

Nutrition is essential to academic success. A nutritious breakfast, lunch and supper (in most schools) are available in the school cafeteria. The menu changes daily and includes a variety of hot and cold entrees.

- Breakfast is free to all students in every school.
- Lunch is free without a Free and Reduced Meal Application (FARM) in more than 80 schools. In the other schools a FARM Application is required for a student to qualify for free meals.
- After-school supper is free for all students in more than 90 schools.

If your child has a food allergy, you should complete a Dietary Accommodations form (available at <http://dcps.dc.gov/food>) and have it signed by a medical provider. All DCPS meals are nut-free but parents are still encouraged to complete the Dietary Accommodations form so that it is on file with the school nurse.

To learn more about food service, to view your school's menus, or to learn about applying for free or reduced lunch, visit the DCPS website at <http://dcps.dc.gov/food> or contact your school directly.

Health and Wellness

Our schools are vital places where school staff, families, and the community come together to keep our students healthy, and where our students can learn how to make healthy choices for themselves and others.

Health Requirements and Forms

Health exams are required annually. As outlined below, a series of medical forms should be turned in to the school as part of the enrollment process. Any updated forms throughout the school year should be submitted to the nurse.

- Universal Health Certificate (required annually documenting a health physical and immunizations).
If you have questions about DC's immunization requirements, please discuss them with your child's physician. You can also contact the DC Department of Health Immunization Division at 202. 576.9325.
- Oral Health Assessment (required for Pre-K3, Pre-K4, K and grades 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11)
- Medication and Treatment Authorization Form (as needed)
- Asthma Action Plan (as needed)
- Action Plan for Anaphylaxis (as needed)

If you decide not to approve the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine for your child (either male or female) in grades 6-10 or decide to exempt your child from the HPV vaccine, please submit a HPV Vaccine Refusal Form which is available on the DCPS website.

If you need to file an exemption for other vaccines, please contact your school nurse. Links to all health forms are available at <http://dcps.dc.gov/health>.

Medications

Whenever possible, families are encouraged to administer medications at home. If medications are needed during school hours, please have your medical provider complete the appropriate forms listed above and return them to the school nurse.

School Nurse Program

The school nurse can promote a healthy school environment and provide for the physical and emotional safety of the school community. If the school has a summer program, a nurse is available on-site during the summer as well.

Mental Health Support

Each school has a mental health team to support the emotional well-being of students, comprised of school social workers, psychologists and/or counselors, who are able to help with a range of issues including, but not limited to, school culture and climate, substance use, and self-confidence. For more information, speak with your school's mental health team.

Sexual Health Services

DCPS and the DC Department of Health (DOH) offer a free sexually-transmitted disease (STD) screening program for all DCPS high school students, which are voluntary and confidential. DOH provides each high school with chlamydia and gonorrhea testing, accompanied by basic sexual health education once a year. DOH will follow up with treatment and counseling for each student who tests positive for chlamydia and gonorrhea. During the 2012-2013 school year, DOH piloted an HIV test with one high school and aims to expand the program in years to come. Your child is not required to participate in any of the screenings or education offered by DOH. Parents are provided with an opt-out form a week prior to the screening date.

DCPS has also adopted DOH's Wrap MC Condom Distribution program in all high schools. In this program, trained school staff provide condoms and optional counseling to students as part of a comprehensive health education program for students. In the 2012-2013 school year, DCPS in partnership with DOH, piloted its first Student Wrap MCs to promote peer-to-peer education and condom availability. Condoms are also available through the school nurse.

Free Medical Care

It is important that students have a regular medical provider. The DC Healthy Families program provides free health insurance for families who live in DC, do not have health insurance and meet program income eligibility requirements. For more information on how to apply for DC Healthy Families call 1.888.557.1116 or visit <http://dhcf.dc.gov/service/dc-healthy-families>. Also, if you have Medicaid, but need help finding a dental provider or making an appointment you can call 1.866.758.6807 or visit the Insure Kids Now website: http://www.insurekidsnow.gov/state/dc/district_oral.html.

For copies of medical forms and for more information regarding any health questions or concerns, please visit <http://dcps.dc.gov> or speak with the nurse at your school.

Local Wellness Policy

DCPS amended its Local Wellness Policy (LWP) in August 2012, in collaboration with local and national experts in nutrition and physical activity, school staff and parents. Student feedback was also incorporated into the new policy.

The LWP articulates DCPS' goals to implement nutrition and physical activity programming towards the following goals: promoting health education and healthy behaviors, providing healthy food options to students, increasing physical activity of students before, during, and after the school day, measuring LWP impact, and engaging community feedback for enhanced programming. The new LWP includes a checklist for schools to guide implementation of the LWP in their school community and ensure compliance with federal and local laws related to LWPs.

Transportation

Unlike some school districts, DCPS does not provide yellow bus transportation for students. However, the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) offers assistance through the School Transit Subsidy program. The school transit subsidy program provides reduced fares for DCPS students who use Metro-bus, Metrorail or the DC Circulator to travel to and from school. Eligible students at all DCPS middle and high schools will need a DC One Card to access transit subsidy passes.

With the DC One Card, students will only have to visit a Metro Sales Office once every school year, provided they don't let their pass expire, and will be able to renew their monthly pass at any Metro station. Students will also be able to enroll online and receive partial refunds for lost or stolen passes.

Middle and high school students should automatically receive a DC One Card at their school. If your child has not received a DC One Card, contact your school. Visit www.dconecard.dc.gov or call 202.671.2273 for additional information about obtaining the DC One Card.

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), through its Division of Transportation, provides yellow bus service for eligible students with special needs. If your child is eligible for transportation services as mandated by their Individual Education Program (IEP), contact the OSSE Parent Call Center at 202.576.5000 or TTY: 771 for information regarding transportation services.

Bullying

DCPS is committed to making every school a safe and welcome space for your child. Families are critical players in these efforts.

- One of the most proactive measures families can take to shield their children from bullying is to talk to them early and openly about what it means to bully or to be bullied. Doing so not only ensures that you and your child maintain open lines of communication, but also reinforces the importance of speaking up about problems at school.
- If you suspect your child may be bullied at school, don't be afraid to ask them about it. Make sure to tell your child that you are there to help and you believe what he or she has to say.
- If you think your child is bullying others, it is important to discuss the behavior and make it clear that bullying is taken very seriously. At the same time, you may want to work with your child to understand some of the reasons behind the bullying.
- If you witness cyberbullying (use of the Internet and related technologies to bully) that includes threats of violence, child pornography or sexually explicit materials, and stalking or hate crimes, you should consider reporting the incident to law enforcement. Cyberbullying also can create classroom disruptions and lead to in-person bullying.

School should be a safe, welcoming environment for your child. If you feel that your child is unsafe or is being bullied at school, contact your child's teacher and the principal.

PARENT TIP

Helping your children be responsible with technology will go a long way to keeping them safe. Here are some things you can do:

1. *Make sure you have passwords for all online accounts*
2. *Monitor screen time (i.e., television, internet, FaceBook/Twitter)*
3. *Keep technology in common areas of your home so you can monitor use*
4. *Turn off technology at night and put it in a safe space*
5. *Set an example by modeling responsible use of technology*

Disciplinary Policies

Our goal is to help your child interact with the learning environment and school community in a positive, responsible and productive way. All DCPS disciplinary policies are subject to the DC Municipal Regulations (DCMR) regarding Student Discipline and Student's Rights and Responsibilities, and are written to align with the tiered system of disciplinary responses. To access these documents, please visit <http://dcps.dc.gov/chapter25>.

School Emergencies, Delays or Closures

The *School Emergency Response Plan and Management Guide* prepares schools to respond to emergencies including weather, natural disasters, and threats involving weapons. The guide was developed in partnership with DCPS, the Metropolitan Police Department, the Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency and other government agencies.

When inclement weather is predicted or occurs, DCPS works hard to ensure students and staff remain safe. The goal is to keep DCPS schools open whenever possible to ensure students have access to all they need, including academic instruction, nutritious meals, and healthy extracurricular activity programming. The decision to delay or close schools is made with careful consideration of road safety, sidewalk safety, and meal availability. You always can determine whether your child should attend school that day or leave early.

There are several options for staying informed about school emergencies, delays or closures:

1. Listen to the local news on the TV and radio
2. Check the DCPS homepage (<http://dcps.dc.gov>)
3. Sign up to receive email alerts (<http://dcps.dc.gov/alerts>)
4. Follow DCPS on Twitter (<http://twitter.com/dcpublicschools>)
5. Follow DCPS on Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/dcpublicschools>)
6. Sign up to receive text messages by texting NEWS to 91990

If an emergency occurs during the school day, know that the staff has been trained to evacuate the school and will allow you to connect with your child as soon as it is safely possible.

PARENT TIP

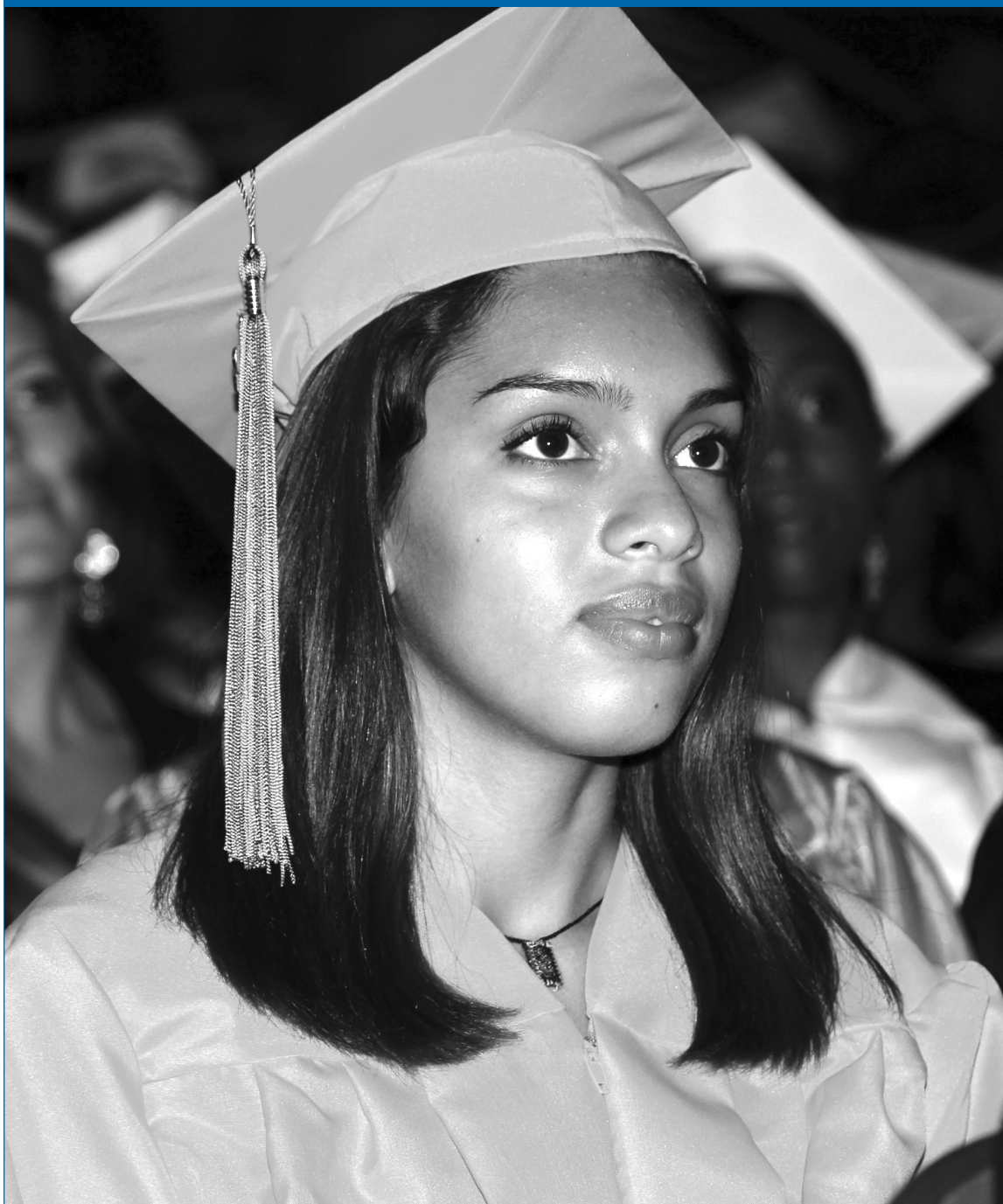
Be sure the school has your CURRENT information! This can include the following:

- Parent/guardian's home, work, and cell phone numbers
- E-mail address
- Current address
- An emergency contact person with current phone number and address
- Health insurance information

School Visitor Policy

Schools are public institutions and they should be open to visits from parents and other interested parties to the extent that visits do not disrupt the education process, a school's operation nor compromise student or staff safety. As such, DCPS facilities will continue to be open to the public as long as visitors do not disrupt school instruction, operation or activities, or threaten the safety and security of students and staff.

Academic Services



Academic Services

DCPS understands that learning begins at birth and continues throughout life. Through a rigorous Academic Plan, DCPS offers a set of program choices and school options that facilitates and nurtures this learning process.

From early childhood to specialized learning programs in elementary, middle and high school, your child is able to select, with your guidance and support, programs for learning that best match their interests. For some, this may focus on science, technology, engineering and math. For others, it might focus on arts or world cultures. All programs are designed to provide your children with the core knowledge that they need for achievement at high levels.

- Common Core State Standards
- Promotion and Retention
- Individual Graduation Portfolio
- Advanced Placement
- Career and Technical Education
- Elementary and Secondary Education Act Reauthorization Waiver (“No Child Left Behind”)
- Assessments
- Early Childhood Education
- Dual Enrollment
- International Baccalaureate
- Graduation Requirements

Common Core State Standards

DCPS has joined the majority of states in adopting a set of standards that lay out what students should be able to know and do from kindergarten through 12th grade. From English/Language Arts to Mathematics, the Common Core State Standards help you understand what your child should learn each year to be successful in college, career and life.

The Common Core will use assessments designed to measure student learning and progress toward mastery of the standards. The goal is to have better, more targeted tests that will help students and teachers.

DCPS will be transitioning to the Common Core gradually, with full implementation expected in the 2014-2015 School Year. To learn more, visit the DCPS website at <http://dcps.dc.gov/academicplan>.

Assessments

At DCPS, we measure our success by how well our students are achieving. We believe that all students can achieve at the highest levels, and it is our job to enable this. Our goal is to ensure that your child is performing at or above grade-level and ultimately graduating from high school, prepared for college and career.

DCPS measures student achievement in a variety of ways, including mastery of educational standards, promotion rate, on-time graduation rate and college-readiness indicators. We also evaluate student performance and achievement by observing your child’s level of engagement and participation in the classroom, and reviewing their coursework and portfolios.

One way that we measure and respond to student progress is by tracking their performance on interim assessments. The DCPS Paced Interim Assessment (PIA) and the Achievement Network (ANet) assessments are tools that schools use to assess student progress throughout the year. After each interim assessment is given and scored, teachers use this data to assess and then modify instruction to student needs.

Another way we measure and respond to student progress is through annual summative assessments, most notably the District of Columbia Comprehensive Assessment System (DC CAS).

To further support student success, we encourage families to review their student’s assessment results. For more information about assessments, visit the DCPS website at <http://dcps.dc.gov/assessments>.

PARENT TIP

Here are some things you can do to make test-taking easier for your child:

- 1. Make sure your child is well rested and has had a healthy breakfast on test days.*
- 2. Make sure that your child has been keeping up on homework and assignments. If you are concerned, talk with your child and the teacher(s) about extra help.*
- 3. Help your child study for the test. Work with your child's teacher to get spelling and vocabulary lists, math fact sheets and unit study guides.*
- 4. Review the test results with your child. Celebrate progress. Talk about incorrect answers to help your child understand and learn from mistakes.*
- 5. Talk with your child about "growth" being most important. No one has to be perfect from the start. It's the growth that we make over time as a result of hard work that is important.*

Promotion and Retention

With regular attendance and close partnership between home and school, most students will receive the academic support they need to be successful from year to year. Decisions about promotion are based on a number of factors.

For Grades 1 - 5, promotion depends on whether your child has done the following:

- Received passing grades in the core subject tests (Reading, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies);
- Achieved the goals of the intervention learning plan (where applicable); and
- Met the DCPS attendance policy.

For Grades 6 - 8, promotion depends on whether your child has done the following:

- Completed three courses in each of the core subjects (English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies);
- Achieved the goals of the intervention learning plan (where applicable); and
- Met the DCPS attendance policy.

Students may be retained once in grades 3, 5 or 8 only when all other interventions have been unsuccessful and the student has not made sufficient academic progress during the course of the school year. Principals have the final authority for all first-time promotion/retention decisions.

For Grades 9 - 12, promotion depends on whether students meet the credit requirements for each grade:

- For promotion to grade 10, students in grade 9 must pass English I, Algebra I, and have earned a minimum of 6 credits.
- For promotion to grade 11, students in grade 10 must pass English II and have earned a minimum of 12 credits.
- For promotion to grade 12, students in grade 11 must pass English III and have earned a minimum of 18 credits.

To graduate, students must earn a minimum of 24 credits as described by the graduation requirements section later in this chapter, demonstrate completion of at least 100 hours of community service, and complete a minimum of two college level/career prep courses.

For more information about Promotion and Retention, contact your school counselor.

Early Childhood Education

DCPS offers comprehensive programs for 3-year-olds (Pre-K3) and 4-year-olds (Pre-K4) that provide rich activities and learning experiences to help prepare students for success in kindergarten and beyond.

Children attend a full-day program, with small class sizes, and participate in fun, engaging, daily lessons designed to build language, literacy, math, science and other skills. They are regularly involved in activities that support social, emotional and physical development. Children also take special classes (“specials”) in music and art.

Families can choose among several program options: Tools of the Mind, Montessori, Reggio Emilio-inspired and Dual Language. The Office of Early Childhood Education also has a partnership with Early Stages, a program that provides early intervention for children with or at-risk of developmental delays. DCPS offers placements for students with special needs including inclusion, non-categorical self-contained classes, and classes for children on the autism spectrum.

The Pre-K3 and Pre-K4 grades are not compulsory but DCPS has significantly increased the number of seats available for these grades. Families are not guaranteed a seat until Kindergarten and must apply for seats during the annual Pre-Kindergarten lottery described in the “Enrolling in DCPS” section of this handbook.

For more information about Early Childhood Education, visit the DCPS website at <http://dcps.dc.gov/ece>.

Middle and High School

Individual Graduation Portfolio

The Individual Graduation Portfolio (IGP) provides families and students in middle and high school with a road map to the future and a record of the past academic progress. Staying on course empowers students to set goals and helps them graduate high school prepared for success in college, career and life. The IGP helps students graduate with all the courses, skills, and experiences needed to make informed decisions about their future education and career. Grade-level milestones and Guideways (the IGP computer program) lead students through the program appropriate to each grade level. There are tools to figure out how students learn best, match strengths to possible careers, and begin college and career exploration and planning.

Creating a Parent Portfolio allows parents to begin navigating choices in the IGP too.

For more information, visit the DCPS website at <http://dcps.dc.gov/IGP>.

PARENT TIP

Do not wait until your child's senior year to think about what comes after high school. From kindergarten on, regularly communicate with your child and their teachers to make sure your child is on track academically. Help your child set goals. Celebrate successes and offer help when challenges arise. Make sure your child knows the sky is the limit and you are there to help. Take advantage of all DCPS has to offer including the Individual Graduation Portfolio, College Awareness month, and one-on-one counseling with a guidance counselor.

Dual Enrollment

A dual enrollment program enables your high school-aged child to enroll in approved college courses. Courses are taken on a college campus, students earn college credit, and may have the opportunity to also earn high school credit. Dual enrollment allows students to experience the college environment, gain exposure to the academic rigor of college courses, and better understand what is required to succeed in college.

For more information regarding dual enrollment opportunities, contact the school counselor.

Advanced Placement (AP)

Advanced Placement (AP) courses can help your child acquire the skills and habits they need to be successful in college. Students improve writing skills, sharpen their problem-solving abilities, and develop time-management skills, discipline, and study habits. DCPS offers AP courses at every high school. Students have the opportunity to earn college credit by taking the AP exam and scoring within an approved range. Participation in AP course work also indicates to colleges and universities that students have sought a rigorous academic course load to prepare for college success.

For more information about AP opportunities, contact your school counselor.

International Baccalaureate (IB)

International Baccalaureate (IB) courses offer a continuum of education consisting of three individual programs, and spans the years from kindergarten to a pre-university diploma. The program encourages international-mindedness by helping students first develop an understanding of their own cultural and international identity. All IB students learn a second language and the skills to live and work with others internationally.

Career and Technical Education (CTE)

Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs provide students with the opportunities to match their skills and interests with real-world careers, explore employment opportunities available in their chosen career, and then acquire the academics, training and experience they need to enter the career of their choice. The CTE program prepares DCPS students for a successful transition from high school to post-secondary education and meaningful careers. CTE delivers rigorous, relevant and meaningful career exploration and education to prepare your student for success in college, careers and life.

Most DCPS high schools offer at least one career cluster or pathway. CTE has adopted a system of 11 career clusters and 31 programs of study. For more information about the CTE programs available in DCPS schools, visit <https://dcps.dc.gov>.

Graduation Requirements

To receive a DCPS diploma, your child must earn a minimum of 24 credits.

The following table outlines the subject areas in which the credits are needed.

Subject	Credits (Carnegie Units)
Art	0.5 credits
Electives	3.5 credits
English	4.0 credits
Health and Physical Education	1.5 credits
Mathematics (including Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, and Upper Level Math)	4.0 credits
Music	0.5 credits
Science (including biology, 2 lab sciences, and 1 other science)	4.0 credits
Social Studies (including World History I & II, DC History, US Government, US History)	4.0 credits
World Languages	2.0 credits
Total	24.0 credits

Your child also must meet the following requirements:

- At least 2 credits of the 24 required credits must be earned through courses that are “College Level or Career Prep” (Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, Career and Technical Education courses, or college-level courses);
- 100 hours of Community Service; and
- If your child attends a specialty high school, he or she may be subject to additional academic or community service requirements

For additional questions about graduation requirements, visit the DCPS website at

<http://dcps.dc.gov/graduation>.

PARENT TIP

Make sure your child is on track for graduating:

1. Join your child in a meeting with the school counselor early on during the freshman year. Talk about goals, what courses should be taken, and what extracurricular activities should be pursued.
2. Schedule regular follow-up meetings with the school counselor so that you have ongoing communication and ample time to strategize and plan for your child's success.
3. Monitor your child's progress. Is homework completed and handed in on time? Is extra support or tutoring in any of the core academic areas needed? Is emotional support or an additional advisory needed?
4. If your child has failed a course, be sure to discuss options with your child and school counselor about evening credit recovery courses, online credit recovery and summer school opportunities to get back on track.
5. Within the IGP (www.dcps.bridges.com) create a Parent Portfolio so you can have access to even more information about your child that will help you best support them.
6. Talk to your child about long-term goals. What courses match your child's interests? What colleges should your child be considering, and what requirements must your child meet for college admissions? Where can your child complete an internship to gain exposure to a field of interest?



PARENT TIP: HELPING YOUR CHILD WITH HOMEWORK

Homework is a way for your child to practice what she is learning at school. When students spend time on meaningful homework exercises, they are more likely to achieve academic success.

As a rule of thumb, children could benefit from the following:

- Kindergarten through second grade: 10-20 minutes of homework daily;
- Third through Sixth grade: 30-60 minutes of homework daily; and
- Seventh through 12th grade: more than an hour of homework daily and time will vary from night to night.

Here are some things you can do to help your child with homework:

1. Talk with your child's teacher about homework expectations. How much time should be spent on homework? What role should you play?
2. Provide a quiet, well-lit, regular place and time for homework. Providing a healthy snack is helpful too.
3. Make sure your child has the tools needed (i.e., paper, pencils, and books).
4. Be positive about homework.
5. Check in while your child works by offering encouragement, not just answers.
6. Let the teacher know if your child is struggling with homework.

Elementary and Secondary Education Act Reauthorization (ESEA) Waiver

The 2001 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, commonly known as “No Child Left Behind” (NCLB), brought important changes to how schools operate. NCLB remains in effect and is managed by D.C.’s Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE).

OSSE applied for and received a waiver from the US Department of Education in July 2012 to allow DC more flexibility to respond to low school performance and spending federal funds while still providing the instructional services to low-income students with the greatest needs. Under the waiver:

- The accountability system has already been modified. The new approach holds schools accountable for both student performance and growth on standardized assessments.
- Your child will still be tested on the DC Comprehensive Assessment System (DC CAS) until school year 2014-15. The DC CAS assesses students on reading in grades 2-10, math in grades 2-8 and 10, science/health in grades 5 and 8, biology in grade 10, and writing in grades 4, 7 and 10.
- Schools are held accountable based on the proportion of their students who are proficient and the proportion who make growth. Schools are then categorized based on these metrics into the following five groups:
 - **Priority**: schools needing intensive support to address low performance;
 - **Focus**: schools needing targeted support to address large achievement gaps;
 - **Developing**: moderate performing schools needing support to continue growth;
 - **Rising**: higher performing schools needing support to continue growth; and
 - **Reward**: schools with the highest levels of student performance and growth.
- Schools now have more flexibility in how they service all students – including those who require intervention and remediation. Schools can continue to use external vendors (Supplemental Education Services – SES) to provide tutoring but now have the flexibility to use other options. Nonetheless, schools may decide that SES are the best option for them. The key is that they have the freedom to make that choice now.
- NCLB parents’ rights, such as parents’ right to know and the parent-school compact, will continue.

Student Support Programs



Student Support Programs

DCPS is committed to seeing every student reach his or her full potential. Our goal is to provide a safe, respectful learning environment that is accessible and challenging for all students. DCPS tries to meet this goal with a host of support programs.

- **Special Education**
 - **Alternative High Schools**
 - **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning Student Support**
 - **Summer School**
 - **Bilingual Education/English Language Learners**
 - **Expectant and Parenting Students**
 - **Homeless Youth**
-

Special Education

The Office of Special Education (OSE) serves students with disabilities by providing high-quality instruction and services as close to home as possible and in the timely and consistent manner they deserve. Services are designed to promote student achievement, inclusion and independence.

DCPS believes:

- Students with disabilities are best served in their neighborhood schools, closer to home, where they will have more opportunities to interact with their typically developing peers, when possible.
- Early identification and intervention will ensure that students with disabilities have the tools and resources to overcome barriers to academic achievement when given the appropriate level of services, at the appropriate time, in the appropriate setting.
- Students with disabilities should receive supports and services that will help them to succeed alongside their peers in a general education classroom whenever possible. Data shows that all students in inclusive settings have better educational and social outcomes.
- Prioritizing academic achievement fosters independence and ensures that students with disabilities will have access to greater opportunities in their post-secondary careers comparable to their typically-developing peers.

If you suspect your child may have a learning disability, you should contact the school for further assistance.

Procedural safeguards are required under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and are intended to protect families and children receiving special education services. For a copy of the District of Columbia's procedural safeguards, please visit <http://bit.ly/ossesafeguards> or for more information, visit the DCPS website at <http://dcps.dc.gov/specialeducation>.

Summer School

DCPS offers several types of school-based summer learning opportunities.

- Summer School is provided for high school students who need credit recovery in key academic areas such as English, Mathematics and Science. Depending on funding availability, seats are opened for students in grades 9 - 11 who are also in need of credit recovery.
- Some high schools require rising ninth graders to participate in a summer academic program to prepare them for the high school curriculum.
- Limited summer programming is also available for students in grades K-8.

More information about Summer School options is typically available in March of each school year.

Alternative High Schools

Alternative high schools are designed to help the most challenged students complete their education. In some cases, these students have previously dropped out of school; in other cases they are at-risk of dropping out and need a setting other than a traditional high school.

STAY schools provide a mix of academic, career/technical and vocational courses. The **CHOICE** school provides opportunities for students who have been suspended from school and may have behavioral concerns. Other alternative schools focus on academic support for incarcerated youth. These are just a few alternative high school options available.

For more information about alternative high schools, visit the DCPS website at <http://dcps.dc.gov/alternativehs>.

Bilingual Education / English Language Learners

Your child may qualify to receive English as a Second Language (ESL) services at their school if he/she communicates in a language other than English and/or if a language other than English is spoken in the home. In order to determine eligibility, students must take an English proficiency screening test (IPT/WAPT) at the Office of Bilingual Education (OBE). Students may receive English as Second Language services using the pull-out or inclusion approach.

A student who presents a valid and official transcript or report card showing subjects studied from the country of origin and grades earned in grade 9 and above will have their academic records evaluated for the purpose of awarding high school credits.

To schedule an appointment for an initial English assessment or for a Foreign Transcript Evaluation, contact OBE.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning Student Support

DCPS is working to make schools safe and inclusive for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) students, staff, and families. Research shows that the way schools and families respond to LGBTQ youth can affect their physical and mental health outcomes, and their decision-making later in life.

As part of a plan to create an inclusive community, DCPS has:

- Developed anti-bullying and discrimination policies that address bullying and discrimination based upon actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity or expression;
- Trained school liaisons on how to build an inclusive and welcoming school community by implementing programming to support LGBTQ students, staff and families (i.e., support groups such as Gay-Straight Alliances); and
- Increased the presence of LGBTQ role models in school curricula and other resources.

Expectant and Parenting Students

The **New Heights Teen Parent Program** provides pregnant and parenting DCPS students (male or female) with the assistance, support and guidance they need to handle the responsibilities of raising a child and graduating from high school. The program seeks to improve the attendance and graduation rates of these students, prepare them for college or career, and prevent subsequent teen pregnancies.

New Heights offers:

- Supportive, on-site case management and assistance with securing services, such as child care vouchers, WIC, housing, TANF, employment, job training opportunities, and college/university admissions;
- Educational workshops on topics including, but not limited to prenatal care, parenting, life skills, financial literacy, career planning, and healthy relationships;
- An incentive program that allows participants to earn free items for their children such as diapers, clothing, toys, equipment, accessories; and
- If eligible, program participants receive tokens for transportation and/or a daily stipend.

To learn more about supports offered for expectant and parenting students, visit the DCPS website at <http://dcps.dc.gov/health>.

Homeless Youth

Consistent with the federal McKinney-Vento guidelines, DCPS provides immediate enrollment to homeless children and youth who lack a fixed, regular and/or adequate night-time residence.

Homeless children are enrolled even when they do not have the typical enrollment forms such as a birth certificate, school or health records, or proof of residency. Students are guaranteed the right to stay in the original school they attended at the time they were displaced, or the boundary school for their current, temporary residence.

Students also may be enrolled in another school if it is determined to be in the best interest of the student. Homeless students are also eligible for additional support from their school including transportation assistance (Metropasses or tokens), uniforms and school supplies.

To learn more about supports offered for homeless youth contact your school counselor.

Frequently Asked Questions



Frequently Asked Questions

This section of the DCPS Parent Handbook includes a listing of the most commonly asked questions received through our primary public engagement communication portals (i.e. telephone, website, email, and public meetings). These questions are not exhaustive, so if you have additional questions not answered in this handbook, contact the Critical Response Team (CRT) at 202.478.5738.

- Enrollment
 - Attendance
 - Assessments
 - Out-of-Boundary Lottery
 - Special Education
 - Before and After School Programs
-

Enrollment

Q: What is a good online resource to use to find more information about DC Public Schools?

A: Visit our school profile webpage at <http://profiles.dcps.dc.gov/> for information about each school.

Q: How do I find my child's in-boundary school?

A: You can find your in-boundary school by going to <http://dcatlas.dcgis.dc.gov/schools/>. Enter your primary residence in the field marked "Enter your address to find," and select "In-boundary school."

Note: Primary residence is verified by proving residency at that address.

Q: How do I prove my residency in the District of Columbia in order to enroll my child?

A: Proving where you live, also called "verifying residency," is a critical part of the enrollment process. Only residents of DC are eligible to receive a free public education in the District. In response to this policy, all parents are required to verify residency. Normally, this verification is done at the school as part of the enrollment process. All parents must verify residency prior to the start of school.

For more information on providing proof of residency, review the enrollment packet available on line at <http://dcps.dc.gov/enroll>.

Q: What is the process for transferring my child to another school?

A: Mid-year transfers can be disruptive to your child's learning and development. As such, DCPS does not encourage families to transfer out of their school once the school year has begun. All efforts should be made to resolve conflicts and concerns at the school level before a student transfer will be facilitated.

Call the Critical Response Team to discuss whether a transfer is necessary and to begin the process if necessary and appropriate.

Q: What are the options for my child who is over age 18 and doesn't have enough credits to graduate high school?

A: The Student Placement Office provides assistance to residents between ages of 15-22 who are seeking secondary educational options.

The Out-of-Boundary Lottery

Q: What is “the Lottery?”

A: The “Lottery” can mean two things: the Pre-Kindergarten Lottery or the K-12 Out-of-Boundary Lottery. Families may submit one application per student to enter the lottery. The lottery application is completed entirely online. There are **no** paper applications.

Q: What resources are available to help families understand the lottery and enrollment process?

A: The Critical Response Team is ready to assist families on a one-on-one basis when it comes to understanding the lottery process. We want to “personalize” enrollment so parents can be assured that their child is being placed in the right setting for them.

This personalized help session includes assistance in navigating DCPS online resources, referrals to school administrators, and the opportunity to find out about new and emerging programs.

Q: At what age does my child have to be to be eligible for Pre-Kindergarten?

A: Per DC Municipal Regulations, families may only enroll children in Pre-K3 if the child is 3 years old by Sept. 30. Per DC Municipal Regulations, families may only enroll children in Pre-K4 if they are 4 years old by Sept. 30.

Q: Is participating in the Pre-Kindergarten Lottery the best opportunity to find my child a seat in Pre-Kindergarten?

A: Unlike grades K-12, families are not guaranteed a seat in Pre-K3 or 4, even at your in-boundary school. The Pre-Kindergarten Lottery generally begins in late January and ends in late February. The application must be completed entirely online; there are no paper applications. Families are able to select up to six schools through the application. Results of the lottery are posted online and mailed to families.

Attendance

Q: What is the policy concerning attendance for students attending Out-of-Boundary schools?

A: A policy has been designed to support regular and timely school attendance for all students. Out-of-Boundary (OOB) students who have more than 10 unexcused absences or 20 unexcused tardies may be asked to return to their neighborhood school at the end of the school year. Schools have been instructed to follow the appropriate attendance interventions to enforce this policy. Families should expect to receive notice in writing or via conference after their child has had five unexcused absences or 10 unexcused tardies.

Special Education

Q: What are the placement options for my child who has disabilities?

A: The first step towards discussing placement options is to contact your school to request an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting. If you are new to DCPS, enroll in your neighborhood school and request to meet with a member of the Student Support Team to discuss what services your child may need to be successful academically. Per the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) it is DCPS' practice to ensure the Least Restrictive Environment for all students with IEPs. However, if you feel that your child's needs are not being met in their current setting, you may request an IEP meeting with your school's Student Support Team to discuss the possibility of increasing or modifying services and placement.

Q: Are students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) eligible to participate in the lottery?

A: Students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) are eligible to participate in the lottery. For students with IEPs, an additional review may be performed to ensure that the destination school is fully able to meet the needs of the IEP.

Assessments

Q: What is the DC CAS?

A: The District of Columbia Comprehensive Assessment System (DC CAS) assesses students on:
1) reading in grades 2 to 10, 2) math in grades 3-8 and 10, 3) science and health in grades 5 and 8,
4) biology in grade HS, and 5) composition in grades 4, 7, and 10. While DCPS oversees the administration of the test, the OSSE is responsible for the overall management. For more information, please visit the OSSE web site at <http://osse.dc.gov>.

Q: How will the DC CAS affect my child?

A: In DCPS, the DC CAS is used to track the academic progress of students. It does not affect your child's grade calculation or promotion to the next grade level.

Q: My child has an IEP. Will he or she be participating in the DC CAS?

A: Students with IEPs are assigned to take the DC CAS with accommodations that are determined by the school's IEP team. However, students with severe cognitive disabilities take the District of Columbia Comprehensive Assessment System – Alternate Assessment (DC CAS-ALT). For more information about which test your student is assigned to take, contact your child's teacher.

Before- and After-School Programs

Q: What are the before- and after-school options for my student?

A: Many schools offer before- and/or after-school programming options for primary, elementary and middle grade students through a partnership with the DCPS Office of Out of School Time, community-based organizations or school-led programs. For more information on your school's before- and after-school options, please contact your school directly.

Have a question not listed?

If you have additional questions or concerns, please contact the Critical Response Team at 202.478.5738.

Central Office Directory



Directory of Services for Families and Students

DCPS Central Office	
Chancellor's Office	202.442.5885
Academic Services	
After-school Programs	202.442.5002
Assessments	202.724.7938
Athletics	202.729.3288
Attendance	202.442.5450
Bilingual Education	202.671.0750
College and Career Readiness	202.727.8648
Communications	202.719.6613
Community Partnerships	202.719.6613
Critical Response Team	202.478.5738
Data and Accountability	202.724.7938
DC One Card	202.671.2273
Digital Gradebook	202.719.6613
Early Childhood Education	202.535.1632
Early Stages	202.442.4800
Enrollment	202.478.5738
Family and Public Engagement	202.719.6613
Food Services	202.442.5112
Graduation Requirements	202.442.5885
High School Application	202.478.5738
Homeless Youth	202.576.9502
Human Resources	202.442.4090
International Baccalaureate	202.442.8873
Language Testing	202.671.0750
LGBTQ Student Support	202.442.5065
Local School Advisory Team	202.719.6613
New Heights Teen Parent Program	202.645.4040
Out of Boundary Lottery	202.478.5738

Out of School Time	202.442.5002
Press	202.535.1096
Residency Verification	202.442.5215
Schools	Visit http://profiles.dcps.dc.gov/ for full school directory
Special Education	202.442.4800
Student Placement	202.939.2004
Summer School	202.442.5002
Title 1	202.442.6025
Transportation (Parent Call Center, OSSE Special Education Division of Transportation (DOT))	202.576.5000
Home/Hospital Instruction Program (formerly Visiting Instructional Services)	202.939.3506
Volunteers	202.719.6613

Additional Services

D.C. Government

Office of the State Superintendent (OSSE)	202.727.6436
DC State Board of Education	202.741.0884
Mayor's Call Center	311
City Council	202.442.4107
Emergency Response	911
Free Medical Care (DC Healthy Families)	1.888.557.1166
Department of Health	202.442.5955
Department of Mental Health	202.442.4107
Child and Family Services Administration (CFSA)	202.442.6100 202.671.SAFE (report abuse)

DCPS Wants to Hear From You!

Parents, families, students:

Is the DCPS Parent Handbook helpful?
Is any information missing or confusing?
Do you have suggestions for future editions?

Please contact us:



Ofpe.info@dc.gov



202.719.6613

Common Acronyms



Common Acronyms

As you sort through the vast amounts of information to find ways to support your child's academic growth, you're likely to encounter many acronyms. If you're not sure what they represent, it may be difficult to fully understand the material you're reading or engage in a conversation with a teacher or school leader. To better assist you as you read through the handbook and as you navigate DCPS, we have compiled a set of commonly used acronyms and the words they stand for. This is not an exhaustive list.

Acronym	Meaning
ANet	Achievement Network Assessment
AYP	Adequate Yearly Progress
CRI	College Readiness Initiative
CTE	Career and Technical Education
DC CAS	District of Columbia Comprehensive Assessment System
DCPS	District of Columbia Public Schools
ELL	English Language Learner
ESEA	Elementary and Secondary Education Act
ESL	English as a Second Language
FARM	Free and Reduced Meal
GED	General Educational Development (exam or certificate)
GPA	Grade Point Average
HIP	Home/Hospital Instruction Program
HSA	Home School Association
IB	International Baccalaureate
IGP	Individual Graduation Portfolio
LCD	Linguistically and Culturally Diverse
LGBTQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning
LSAT	Local School Advisory Team
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
NSLP	National School Lunch Program
OCAO	Office of the Chief Academic Officer
OFPE	Office of Family and Public Engagement
OOC	Office of the Chancellor
OSE	Office of Special Education
OSSE	Office of the State Superintendent of Education
OYE	Office of Youth Engagement
PIA	Paced Interim Assessment
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
SBP	School Breakfast Program
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Math
UHC	Universal Health Certificate

My Notes

This space is for your use. Jot down questions that you want to remember to ask at upcoming meetings.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

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My Notes

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SCHOOL MEETINGS TO DISCUSS DATA

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